United Nations S/PV.5045

Security Council

Fifty-ninth year

Provisional

5045th meeting

Tuesday, 28 September 2004, 10.20 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Yáñez-Barnuevo	(Spain)
Members:	Algeria	Mr. Baali
	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Benin	Mr. Zinsou
	Brazil	Mr. Sardenberg
	Chile	Mr. Muñoz
	China	Mr. Cheng Jingye
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Germany	Mr. Trautwein
	Pakistan	Mr. Akram
	Philippines	Mr. Mercado
	Romania	Mr. Motoc
	Russian Federation	Mr. Konuzin
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Emyr Jones Parry
	United States of America	Ms. Patterson

Agenda

The situation in Afghanistan

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

04-52421 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Afghanistan

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Afghanistan in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite the representative of Afghanistan to take a seat at the Council table.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Farhâdi (Afghanistan) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Guéhenno to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2004/634, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Guéhenno (*spoke in French*): Eleven days from now, a landmark development in the Bonn peace process will take place: Afghans will go to the polls to elect their President for the first time in the history of Afghanistan. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to update the Council on the preparations for the presidential election.

The logistical preparations are on track for the 9 October polling date. All regional and provincial offices have submitted operational plans for the elections, on the basis of which material and staff have been allocated to the various field offices of the Joint Electoral Management Body (JEMB). All ballot boxes and printed materials have arrived in Afghanistan. From Kabul, they are now being transported to the various provincial offices, where they will be secured until the election date. They will then be transported to polling centres immediately before the election. Staffing those offices is currently the focus of a large and complex effort. The recruitment of some 125,000 people for approximately 5,000 polling centres in the country has been completed in six out of the eight regions involved. In the west and in the south, recruitment will be finished shortly.

The staff already hired in Afghanistan include some 5,000 site supervisors, who are receiving training and who in turn are training the staff they will supervise. The recruitment has been carried out in close coordination with local communities. During the voter registration period, the cooperation of those communities proved how crucial an element it was for the security and integrity of the electoral process.

Despite the recent episodes of violence in Herat, which somewhat delayed the operations in western Afghanistan, the tensions in that part of the country have now subsided, enabling the electoral preparations to resume despite the damage caused to the offices of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and of the JEMB during the incidents of 12 September.

Eighteen presidential and 36 vice-presidential candidates, including three women, representing a broad spectrum of Afghanistan's various political and ethnic components, have been campaigning in the presidential election since the official start of the campaign, 7 September. Although Kabul is the centre of political activities — as one would expect — the various candidates have been campaigning throughout

the country, disseminating their messages both through the public and private media and via public gatherings.

Meanwhile, the JEMB has adopted several regulations — on campaign procedures, campaign financing, electoral offences and the media — which form a legal framework for the campaign. In addition, those regulations define the free exercise of voting rights and the responsibilities and limits of Government action with respect to the elections. They also require candidates, their agents and their supporters to refrain from using language that incites hatred or violence in any form.

The regulation on campaign financing defines who can contribute to campaigns and requires candidates periodically to report contributions and expenditures to the JEMB. The regulation also specifies that public resources cannot be used for campaign purposes except as part of a programme that benefits all candidates, without exception, under the oversight of the JEMB. The media regulation establishes rules concerning the allocation of advertising time and space in the media for political campaigns. It is also worth noting that candidates receive airtime on national radio and television.

(*spoke in English*)

With a view to improving the political environment, the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission and UNAMA continue to monitor and report on the exercise of political rights throughout the country. The second report, covering the period from 8 July to 24 August, was released on 5 September. The reports have been distributed to a wide audience in order to draw the attention of the Government and the international community to the need for corrective action in specific areas. They also point to a number of problems — in areas such as access to media, security and the behaviour of local officials — and make recommendations aimed at realizing the democratic potential of the presidential election. Those recommendations are addressed to the Government, political parties, the JEMB and the international community. A third report, focusing on campaign issues, will be released by the end of this month.

On the recommendation of the Media Commission, the JEMB adopted a code of conduct for the media that provides for, among other things, accurate, fair and balanced reporting and stipulates that the media have the duty to inform the public correctly and to promote democratic values. The regulation also specifies that all candidates have the right to free political advertising space or airtime on the State-run media. The Media Commission has begun monitoring media compliance with the code of conduct.

As a further guarantee of freedom and fairness, the presence of national and international monitors will be important, especially on election day. Security and other constraints have made it difficult for international organizations and Governments to deploy a full-fledged observation mission. It is nevertheless encouraging that at least a number of international and national monitors are being deployed to various regions. The JEMB has accredited 11 national and international monitoring organizations, and it will accredit another 14 in the coming days.

Some 3,510 monitors have applied for accreditation so far: 88 international and 3,422 national. International organizations, including embassies, have requested accreditation as special guests for more than 139 international staff, whose presence at the voting centres will undoubtedly enhance the confidence of Afghans in the credibility of the process. Further, more than 12,947 agents of 24 political parties have been accredited so far to monitor the elections.

Those registered as monitors and special guests will not provide a formal statement after the elections. Many groups will provide reports to their respective Governments or Member States on their findings during the electoral process. In addition, they will make recommendations with a view to improving the process ahead of the parliamentary and local elections scheduled for next spring. In total, on 9 October, more than 16,000 domestic observers and monitors and approximately 227 international monitors, or special guests, will closely watch voting in the areas where they are deployed, mainly concentrated in the regional centres.

I would like to say a word on out-of-country elections. Afghan refugees in the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan will also vote in the presidential elections on 9 October. Despite a slow start, registration and voting preparations in both countries are now well under way. Registration of voters in Pakistan will take place from 1 to 3 October in 400 centres in Islamabad and in the refugee-hosting provinces of Baluchistan and North-West Frontier,

after which lists will be displayed for exhibition and challenges. It may be recalled that no registration will take place in the Islamic Republic of Iran, since existing refugee identification documents will be used as voter identification cards. Voting in Iran will occur in Tehran and the seven largest refugee-hosting provinces. After the polling, ballot boxes from each country will be transported to Kabul for counting. Diplomatic missions in Iran and Pakistan have expressed interest in being accredited as special guests.

Turning to security of the elections, the election security plan has been developed by the JEMB secretariat in close consultation with national security agencies, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the coalition forces. The plan includes securing polling sites and counting centres, as well as the movement of personnel and sensitive material such as blank and filled ballots. Building on security arrangements developed during the registration process, the national police will provide security at the polling sites, with the national army ensuring security of the areas around the sites and ISAF or the coalition providing outer-ring support. The security plan also identifies secure routes for transport of ballots and provides that police units will accompany them. International forces will focus especially on the sensitive aspects of the process, such as ballot transportation and counting centres.

Discussions are ongoing with national and international security partners to further clarify roles and incident management and responses, including the utilization of quick reaction forces and communication channels. Last week, a simulation exercise was conducted, in which the JEMB and its security partners rehearsed a series of multiple incidents across the country. The information was centralized in one operations centre and fed through analysis groups to a senior decision-making body, which includes the Government security agencies, the JEMB secretariat, representatives of the international security forces and UNAMA.

Multiple incidents across the country on or around election day cannot be excluded. All efforts must be undertaken to be fully prepared to react to attacks, especially on polling sites, transportation of ballots and counting centres. To that end, we would like to thank the coalition for its decision to deploy an additional battalion and logistical capacity — actually, air capacity — in support of the process. The completion of ISAF's deployment in the north-east and the north-west is a welcome development, although we had hoped that the second stage of its expansion could have been finalized prior to the elections in order to enable the coalition forces to focus on the east and the south.

Because security forces are thinly spread out, and based on the experience during the voter registration process, one key security factor will be the involvement of local communities in protecting staff, facilities and material in their respective areas. Considerable efforts are being made to define with tribal and community leaders their crucial role in local security arrangements, particularly in the east, south-east and south. Tribal elders have been requested both to provide security and to work with local councils to ensure that those attempting to disrupt the process are deterred or discouraged. In most cases, their response has been extremely positive.

With respect to the security of out-of-country registration and voting, we are grateful to the Governments of the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan for the considerable efforts deployed to protect electoral operations in their respective countries. In Pakistan, anonymous attempts to intimidate both voters and staff of the International Organization for Migration, our out-of-country implementing partner, have been made in recent weeks. Those threats have been brought to the attention of the relevant authorities, and we are encouraged by the assurances we have received that they will be rapidly addressed and promptly responded to.

Last but not least, let me refer to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process. It is essential for the creation of an environment conducive to free and fair elections, as it will reduce the ability of local power brokers to exert undue influence during the elections. The DDR process has gained some momentum over the past few weeks. That is a result of the renewed commitment by the Ministry of Defence to implement the programme, concerted engagement of local commanders by the central Government and the international community and efforts by the Ministry of Justice to apply rigorously the law establishing that political parties can be registered only if they sever links with militia forces. As a result, more than 2,000 men have been disarmed in the past 10 days, with several thousand more being verified for inclusion in the DDR

programme. Additionally, the cantonment of heavy weapons has been accelerated — 50 per cent have now been cantoned — in an attempt to complete this programme for all operational weapons ahead of the elections.

In conclusion, the successful outcome of the ballot on 9 October will represent a significant step along Afghanistan's path to democracy. In the 11 days that remain, it is incumbent on all — the Afghans and international community — to work in concert to ensure that the process is a success. As the Council has heard today, the technical arrangements are on track but are made vulnerable by the prevailing level of insecurity. The responsibility for security rests primarily with the Afghan Government. Despite considerable efforts made thus far to establish, train and deploy national army and police forces, they are not yet ready to bear the entire burden. Therefore, they continue to depend on the support of international forces.

Beyond the elections, the Afghans and the international community must remain engaged. We cannot afford to lose sight of the challenges that remain: the preparations for the parliamentary elections, the need for significant development of the underpinnings of the State and stemming the tide of the illicit narcotics industry.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Guéhenno for his briefing.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I should now like to invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.